

Blu-ray Review: Fritz Lang's 'Ministry of Fear' Enters Criterion Collection

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 25, 2013 - 11:24am

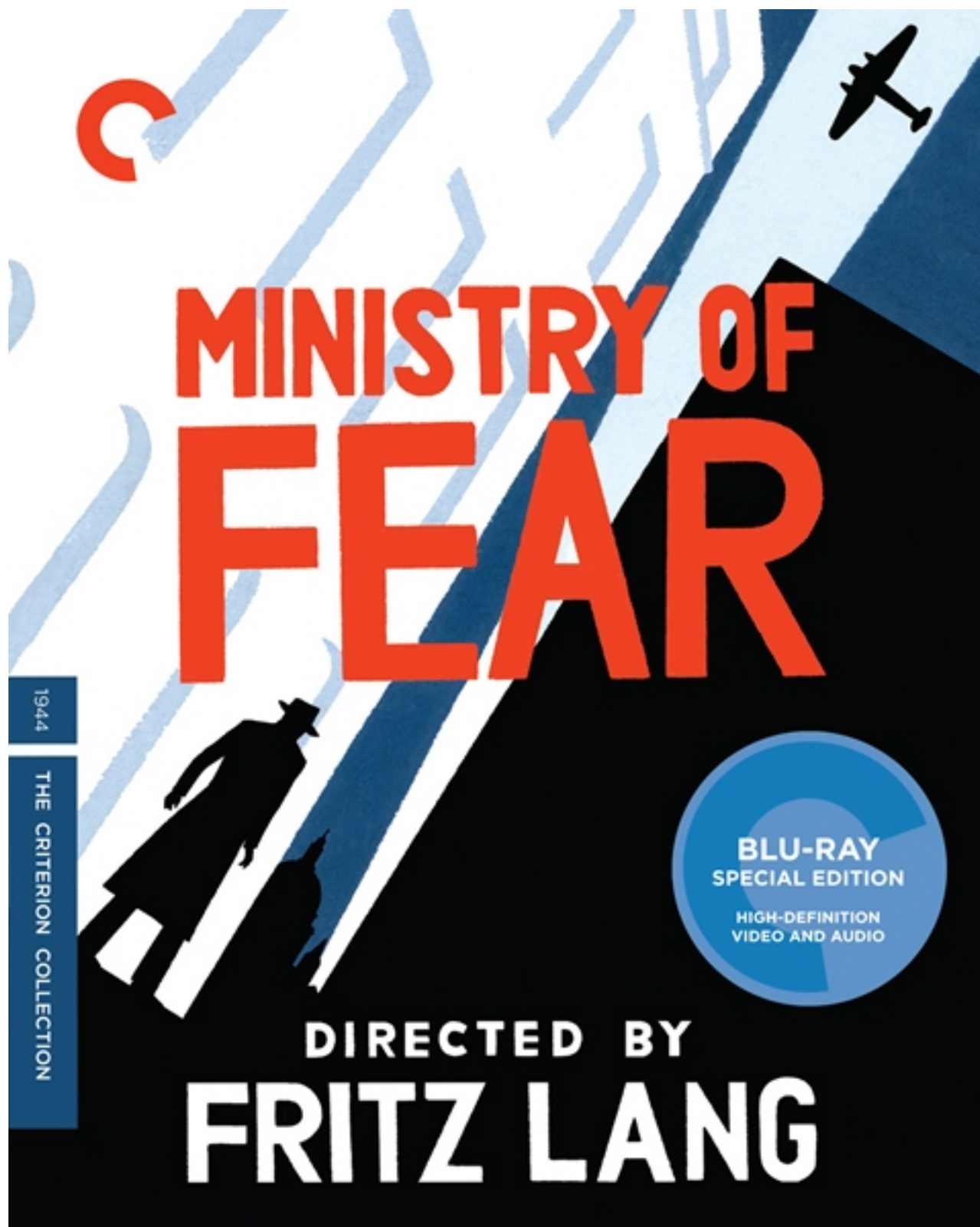
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CHICAGO – Slight on special features and not as instantly recognizable as some recent inductions into the Criterion Collection like “On the Waterfront” or “Badlands,” Fritz Lang’s “Ministry of Fear” could easily slip under the radar even for people who know and love the thriller. Lang is one of the most interesting filmmakers of his era, as he found ways to inject his seemingly traditional work with much-more-complex themes. Working in Hollywood during World War II, Lang made thrillers that were more than just thrillers. “Ministry of Fear” is one of his best.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

While it's an entertaining thriller with top-notch production values and a surprisingly great performance from Ray Milland, part of the problem with the legacy of “Ministry of Fear” is the films with which it is easy to compare. Carol Reed’s “The Third Man” would touch on some of the same themes and is a vastly superior film, one of the best ever made. And in the Lang legacy, nothing compares to “M,” itself released in a glorious Criterion Blu-ray edition. While I vastly prefer “The Third Man” and “M,” one shouldn’t ignore this tight (87 minutes), paranoia-filled thriller. The Criterion edition is lighter than most with a very short interview with Lang scholar Joe McElhaney and a great essay from one of the better writers on film alive, Glenn Kenny, and so it’s not the first Criterion Blu-ray of the season I’d recommend but if you’re a fan of WWII thrillers, Milland, Lang, or even films that may not get the credit they deserve, it’s worth a look.



Ministry of Fear was released on Criterion Blu-ray and DVD on March 12, 2013

Photo credit: Courtesy of the Criterion Collection

Synopsis:

Suffused with dread and paranoia, Fritz Lang's adaptation of Graham Greene's novel is a plunge into the eerie shadows of a world turned upside down by war. On his way to London after being released from a mental asylum, Stephen Neale (Ray Milland) stops at a seemingly innocent village fair, after which he finds himself caught in the web of a sinister, possibly Nazi-connected underworld. Lang was among the most illustrious of the European émigré filmmakers working in Hollywood during World War II, and Ministry of Fear is one of his finest American productions, an unpredictable thriller with style to spare.

Special Features:

- o New Interview With Fritz Lang Scholar Joe McElhaney
- o Trailer
- o An Essay By Critic Glenn Kenny

"Ministry of Fear" stars Ray Milland and Marjorie Reynolds. It was directed by Fritz Lang. It was released on Criterion Blu-ray and DVD on March 12, 2013.



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